

# **ARIZONA**

## **Child and Family Services Review**

### **Final Report**

**February 1, 2002**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Pacific Hub

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Child and Family Services (CFS) Review is designed to help States improve child welfare services and to enhance the outcomes for families and children who receive those services by identifying strengths and needs within a State program, as well as identifying areas where technical assistance can lead to program improvements.

The State's program is examined from two perspectives: the outcomes of services provided to children and families, and the Systemic Factors that affect the agency's ability to help children and families. The review is in two stages – Statewide assessment and on-site Federal-State review. The Statewide assessment provides an opportunity for the State to conduct a self-assessment by examining programmatic data in light of programmatic goals and outcomes for children and families. The on-site review is conducted in order to get an indepth understanding of how services are delivered. The on-site review includes intensive reviews of a sample of in-home and out-of-home child welfare cases and interviews with State and local stakeholders and service providers.

Arizona completed the Statewide assessment in July 2001. The on-site review, including the reading of 50 sample cases, was conducted the week of September 24, 2001 at 3 sites (Cochise, Maricopa and Yavapai Counties). The period of case record review was April 1, 2000 to the date of the review, September 24, 2001.

The information from both phases of the review was compiled and used to determine the State's degree of conformity with the requirements under review. Arizona was found in substantial conformity in five of the seven systemic areas (Statewide Information System, Case Review System, Service Array, Agency Responsiveness to the Community and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, and Recruitment and Retention) and two specific Safety Outcomes (S1 and S2). Two systemic areas (Quality Assurance System and Training) and the five specific Permanency and Well-being Outcomes are not in substantial conformity.

For the areas where the State is not in substantial conformity with requirements, the State has the opportunity to implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) designed to correct the areas of nonconformity. The State must submit its PIP to the Federal Regional Office within 90 calendar days from the date the State receives written notice from the Administration for Children and Families that the State is not operating in substantial conformity.

Penalties are suspended while the State implements the approved PIP. The total estimated penalty for the 7 areas of non-conformity is \$885,269.

# Introduction

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A review of the State of Arizona child and family services programs was completed pursuant to section 1123A of the Social Security Act and 45 CFR 1355.31 through 1355.37. These sections charge the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) with the review of such programs. The purpose of the review is to determine the degree of conformity with State plan requirements and other program requirements under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act.

The reviews cover the range of child and family services funded through Titles IV-B and IV-E, including child protective services, foster care, adoption, independent living, and family support and preservation services. The process evaluates seven specific Safety, Permanency and Well-being Outcomes of services. In addition to reviewing for Outcomes, the process also examines seven Systemic Factors that affect the State's capacity to deliver services.

The review process features two major phases. The first phase, the Statewide Assessment, consists of the development of a State Profile, derived from data for Federal fiscal year (FFY) 1999 contained in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and for calendar year 1999 from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). This Profile provides information on key indicators relating to safety and permanency for children entering the child welfare system. States develop their Statewide Assessment using this data and other sources of information. The assessment analyzes the process, procedures and policies of the State's child protective services and foster care and adoption programs. This assessment also focuses on the Systemic Factors that are in place that enable the State to carry out the process, procedures and policies of the program.

The second phase, the On-site Review, includes intensive reviews of 50 sample cases and interviews with State and local stakeholders and service providers. Information from both phases of the review is used to determine the State's degree of conformity with the requirements under review.

In reviewing for Outcomes and Systemic Factors, the process is designed to identify both the strengths and areas needing improvement in State programs. For those areas in which the State is determined not to be operating in substantial conformity with review requirements, the State has the opportunity to implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) designed to correct the areas of nonconformity. According to 45 CFR 1355.34(b)(3) for the initial State CFS review, each Outcome must be substantially achieved in 90 percent of the cases examined during the On-site Review in order to be determined in substantial conformity. Although the State is advised of applicable penalties associated with the degree of nonconformity, the penalties are not assessed until the State has had an opportunity to correct the areas of nonconformity through the PIP.

The period under review for the Child and Family Service On-site Review in Arizona was from April 1, 2000 to September 24, 2001. The review process consisted of the following activities:

The State completed the Statewide Assessment in July 2001 in consultation with the ACF Regional Office.

The State and the ACF Regional Office selected three locations for the On-site Review: Maricopa (26 cases), Cochise (12 cases) and Yavapai (12 cases) Counties. The On-site Review was conducted during the week of September 24-28, 2001.

A State and Federal review team of 54 persons reviewed a total of 50 sample cases. Review teams at each site consisted of a site leader and co-site leader from Federal staff, a site coordinator from State staff, and 20 two-person State/Federal case review teams. These teams reviewed and rated the services provided children and

families in relationship to safety, permanency and well-being criteria. This was done by reading the case records and interviewing those involved with the case such as parents, caseworkers, foster parents, service providers, and when appropriate, the children themselves.

The teams also conducted interviews and focus groups with approximately 125 State and local stakeholders, including foster parents, managers, caseworkers and supervisors, citizen review boards, judges, and other community partners. The stakeholders' comments are included in the Summary of Findings section of the report. Comments were included only if they represented common themes expressed by a number of stakeholders or frequently repeated by various stakeholder groups. Comments made by single stakeholders and not repeated throughout the interviews were not included in the report since they did not represent a common theme.

The results of the Statewide Assessment, the On-site Case Review and the Stakeholder Interviews were compiled and used to make a determination of the State's degree of conformity with regard to each of the seven Outcomes and each of the seven Systemic Factors.

This report summarizes the information obtained from the review pertaining to each Outcome and Systemic Factor, and the Performance Indicators used to evaluate them. The ACF Regional Office will be working with the Arizona Division of Children, Youth and Families to develop a PIP that addresses those areas not in substantial conformity.

## Key Findings for Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Outcomes

In order for a State to be determined to be in substantial conformity with any given Outcome, the Outcome must be substantially achieved in 90% of the cases reviewed in the State's first CFSR. In addition, the State must meet the national standard for the Statewide aggregate data indicators related to that particular Outcome.

Note: The following is a summary of key findings. Detailed information on numbers, percentages, and their analysis are found in the discussion of each Outcome that follows this section.

### SAFETY OUTCOMES

#### 1. Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

**This Outcome is in substantial conformity.**

- 90% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Safety Outcome 1, which meets the 90% threshold.
- The Statewide data indicator for **repeat maltreatment** is at 4.8% and meets the national standard of 6.1%.
- The Statewide data indicator for **maltreatment of children in foster care** is at .08% and meets the national standard of .57%.

Reports of abuse and neglect during the period of review were generally responded to promptly and investigated timely by staff exhibiting persistent and effective efforts to contact families. Overall, 84% of the cases in which reports were received during the review period were investigated within the required State timeframes.

Case reviews disclosed only 4% of the cases having incidents of maltreatment during the review period, which is less than the Statewide and national percentages.

Stakeholders commented that safety is the first concern for reunification and that workers are prompt in investigating reports referred from the Hotline. Stakeholders have mixed feelings regarding the Hotline. Some state the Hotline has increased consistency across the State, while others feel some discomfort that the Hotline might not be sufficiently responsive or that it may delay reports being received by investigating workers.

#### 2. Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

**This Outcome is in substantial conformity.**

- 91% of the applicable cases reviewed substantially achieved Safety Outcome 2, which exceeds the 90% threshold.

Staff routinely and quickly offer a wide array of services to families even when reports of abuse or neglect are unsubstantiated. Services are usually individualized to meet the children and families' needs. Staff also make timely and appropriate referrals for food, clothing and housing when these needs are identified. There were few instances where services needed were not provided or services provided did not meet the family's needs.

The Family Builders Program has assisted Arizona in providing 100% response to reports of child abuse and neglect and assuring families have the opportunity to receive services that would not have received any attention prior to Family Builders. However, stakeholder interviews noted concern about the Family Builders Program's ability to protect children from abuse or neglect. Community education and awareness should be

provided on the Family Builders' criteria for referral and threshold for removal, and the fact that cases that would not have been previously investigated are now responded to and receive services.

## PERMANENCY OUTCOMES

### 1. Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

**This Outcome is not in substantial conformity.**

- 74% of the applicable cases reviewed substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 1, which is below the 90% threshold.
- The Statewide indicator for **foster care re-entries** is at 10.7%, which does not meet the national standard of 8.6% or fewer.
- The Statewide indicator for **stability of foster care placements** is at 81.9%, which does not meet the national standard of 86.7% or more.
- The Statewide indicator for **length of time to achieve reunification** is at 68.0 %, which does not meet the national standard of 76.2% or more.
- The Statewide indicator for **length of time to achieve adoption** is at 19.8%, which does not meet the national standard of 32% or more.

2 children (6.5%) of the 31 applicable foster care cases reviewed had multiple entries into foster care during the review period. This is not consistent with the results of analysis of the Data Profile, therefore, it appears that the failure to meet the national standard for foster care re-entries may be due to a problem with data integrity as was identified in the Statewide Assessment.

Stability of foster care placement was noted as an area needing improvement. 9 children (29%) of the 31 foster care cases reviewed experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review that were not directly related to helping achieve the case plan goal. 7 of the 9 had special behavioral or medical needs. All of these children were above 11 years old except for 1, who was 8. The data appear to indicate that the children with more than 2 placements tend to be older and more emotionally and behaviorally disturbed.

The case review noted that 86% of the children who had the permanency goal of reunification were reunified in 12 months or less. The inconsistency between the case review and the data profile (68% within 12 months) may be due to problems with data integrity.

The length of time to achieve adoption was identified as an area needing improvement. There were delays in finalizing adoptions due to disruptions because pre-adoptive families were not adequately prepared to meet a child's special needs. There were delays in scheduling hearings to terminate parental rights with no apparent justifiable reasons. There were delays in completing birth certificates, home studies, criminal record checks, and subsidy paperwork. The delays were attributed to increased workloads, backlogs in adoption cases, lack of effective concurrent planning, and/or lack of attention in effectively addressing behavioral, attachment and bonding issues.

### 2. The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

**This Outcome is not in substantial conformity.**

- 81% of the applicable cases reviewed substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 2, which is below the

90% threshold.

Proximity of foster care placements to the child's family was a substantial and consistent strength. Placement with siblings was also rated “strength.” Additionally, in most cases, the agency provided services that contributed to maintaining the parent-child relationship.

Visits between parents and their children, visits between siblings, and preserving connections were areas needing improvement. There was often a lack of case file documentation as to the reasons for the agency's actions or inaction related to these items.

## CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

### 1. Families Have Enhanced Capacity To Provide For Their Children’s Needs.

**This Outcome is not in substantial conformity.**

- 70% of the applicable cases reviewed substantially achieved Well-being Outcome 1, which is below the 90% threshold.

There is a comprehensive array of services available to families Statewide. Assessments of family needs were made and services were provided accordingly. However, there was a lack of services related to grief and loss situations and to sexual abuse assessment and treatment.

Families were typically aware of the services available and necessary to lead to the safe return of a child and/or successfully maintaining a child in the home. However, in some cases little evidence was provided to support the active involvement of parents in the development of the case plan. Children, even when old enough, were typically not involved in the development of the case plan.

Timeliness of worker visits with children and the parents were a strength. Children and parents were typically seen within DES’s required timeframes. However, in the largest metropolitan area, when a family received Family Preservation Services, there was often a lag between the time services were terminated and the time the cases were closed. As a result, there were no worker visits during the lag period and there was no DES’s follow-up with the family to insure that family needs had been met before case closure.

### 2. Children Receive Appropriate Services To Meet Their Educational Needs.

**This Outcome is not in substantial conformity.**

- 85% of the applicable cases reviewed substantially achieved Well-being Outcome 2, which is below the 90% threshold.

While in some locations within the State there is evidence that caseworkers, foster parents and other interested parties successfully advocated for the educational needs of children, this does not occur consistently throughout the State, as reported by stakeholders. Therefore, the educational needs of some children are not being met.

### 3. Children Receive Adequate Services To Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs.

**This Outcome is not in substantial conformity.**



- 59.2% of the applicable cases reviewed substantially achieved Well-being Outcome 3, which is below the 90% threshold.

Although some children are receiving adequate physical and mental health services, it is clear that many children were not receiving needed services. In many cases, initial health screenings were not completed according to State policy, families were unable to access needed services and/or follow-up services were not provided.

All sites consistently lacked appropriate assessment and services to families in sexual abuse cases that resulted in the child's placement or family involvement with the agency.

It was noted in interviews with stakeholders that it is often difficult to obtain specialized mental health services, placements in residential treatment programs.

## Key Findings for Systemic Factors

Each of the seven Systemic Factors was rated on a scale from “1” to “4” on the basis of review information on State performance on multiple State plan and program requirements associated with the particular Systemic Factor. If all the requirements for a Systemic Factor were met, the Systemic Factor was rated a “4.” If all except one requirement was met, the Systemic Factor was rated a “3.” A rating of “3” or “4” resulted in a determination that the State was in substantial conformity on that factor.

If some of the requirements for a Systemic Factor were in place but more than one (except the information system Systemic Factor) was rated as an area needing improvement, the Systemic Factor was rated a “2” and resulted in a determination that the State was not in substantial conformity on that factor. Except in the information system Systemic Factor, if one area was rated as an area needing improvement, the Systemic Factor would be rated a “1” and would result in a determination that the State was not in substantial conformity on that factor.

### 1. Statewide Information System

**This Systemic Factor was rated “4” and is in substantial conformity.**

Arizona has a sophisticated data system (CHILDS) that can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of children in foster care. The system is able to provide useful case information to case managers for supervising case work and program evaluation. Aggregated data can be generated all across the State and is helpful to managers and supervisors for program evaluation and is used for Outcome-based reports.

### 2. Case Review System

**This Systemic Factor was rated “3” and is in substantial conformity.**

In some instances, mostly in-home cases, families were not actively involved in the case-planning process. More consistency is needed in involving both the child and families in case planning, especially children that are old enough to be involved in the case plan development. More consistency is also needed in addressing educational and health needs of the child in the case plan. Stakeholders were concerned that the State’s high vacancy rate and staff turnover are affecting the quality of the case plan and consistency in involving both the children and families in the case planning.

The Model Court (one judge/one family throughout the legal process) has played a significant role in facilitating initial case plan development with a focus on visitation, services and placements due to the continuity it provides.

Both the 6-month periodic reviews and the 12-month permanency hearings are held timely and are substantive. Internal and external stakeholder interviews indicated that the judges, attorneys and workers are all well aware of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) timeframes for permanency hearings. This has a positive effect on mobilizing services to move children to permanency.

Both Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) 6-month reviews and permanency hearings are inclusive, especially in the FCRB hearings. However, the opportunity for foster parents to be heard and participate in a court hearing is inconsistent and courts may rely on the CASA or GAL to speak for the foster parents even when the foster parents were present.

The case review indicates tribes (particularly the Navajo Nation) receive timely notice of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) for children in care.

### 3. Quality Assurance System

**This Systemic Factor was rated "2" and is not in substantial conformity.**

The Department of Economic Security (DES) has numerous quality assurance systems in place to monitor case work, the quality of services and outcomes. However, there is no formal Statewide quality assurance system in place. Stakeholders reported that steps have been taken to implement a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system Statewide that will formalize the Statewide quality assurance system.

### 4. Training

**This Systemic Factor was rated "2" and is not in substantial conformity.**

DES provides initial and ongoing training through a variety of methods and opportunities. Stakeholder interviews reported that the workers are well-trained and that the core training addresses the workers' basic needs to fulfill their job responsibilities. However, it was also stated that workers are not always able to complete core training prior to assuming a caseload due to the high vacancy rate. Therefore, workers are not adequately trained and prepared prior to assuming a full caseload. DES anticipates the recently adopted new worker training (Training Institute – pre-core training) will enable workers to complete their training prior to assuming a full caseload.

Presently, there is no system in place to ensure the consistency and quality of foster parent training. Foster parent training is provided through contractors, and the training is tailored to the community. Most foster parents felt their training met their needs. Foster parents did note a need to provide more specialized training, such as caring for older children and children with emotional and/or behavioral issues. DES needs to develop and implement a quality assurance system for foster parent training.

### 5. Service Array

**This Systemic Factor was rated "3" and is in substantial conformity.**

A wide array of services is available to children and families in Arizona, especially in urban areas. There are a number of initiatives and pilot projects, such as 300 Kids Project, to coordinate services and individualize an approach to achieve permanency for hard-to-place children.

However, in the stakeholder interviews and case record review, it was noted that when a child moves from one community to another, maintaining the services and continuity of care was an area needing improvement. Also, Title XIX mental health services, residential treatment programs, and adequate placement programs were noted numerous times by stakeholders as a need, particularly in rural areas.

### 6. Agency Responsiveness to the Community

**This Systemic Factor was rated "4" and is in substantial conformity.**

Stakeholders indicated DES is responsive, and there is a broad and inclusive process to seek input and share information with community partners. Stakeholders cited numerous examples of positive ongoing collaboration and coordination efforts, both at the systemic and the case levels.

## 7. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention

**This Systemic Factor was rated "3" and is in substantial conformity.**

DES has comprehensive licensing standards for foster and adoptive homes and child care institutions that reflect national standards. Court approved kinship foster homes and certified adoptive homes facilitate relative placements. DES obtains criminal background checks as required by Federal law.

DES has three levels of recruitment and utilizes various strategies to recruit ethnically and racially diverse homes. Despite the improvements, the foster and adoptive homes available in the State are not equivalent to the ethnic and racial diversity of children in out-of-home placements. DES needs to continue to improve recruitment efforts, especially for African American, Hispanic and Native American foster and adoptive parents.

Recruitment of homes for older children and children with emotional and/or behavioral needs was also identified by stakeholders as an area needing improvement.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Part 1: Performance Outcomes on Safety, Permanency and Well-being

#### I. SAFETY

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of Outcome achievement:					
	<b>Team 1</b>	<b>Team 2</b>	<b>Team 3</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	22	12	11	45	90%
Partially Achieved:	4	0	1	5	10%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0	0	0	
Not Applicable:	0	0	0	0	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:</b>					
	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>State's Percentage CFY 1999</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>	
Repeat maltreatment	6.1% or fewer	4.8%	X		
Maltreatment of children in foster care	.57% or less	.08%	X		

#### Status of Outcome S-1: Is in Substantial Conformity.

Of the 50 cases reviewed, 90% substantially achieved the Outcome, which meets the 90% threshold..

#### Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

##### State Assessment

State data indicate that DES and Family Builders staff have maintained a 100% response rate to Hotline calls thereby meeting the statutory criteria for response. The ability to respond to 100% of reports of maltreatment is a strength for Arizona and improves safety outcomes for children.

The Child Safety Profile indicates that despite an increase in Arizona's child population, the number of reports disposed during 1999 and 2000 remained stable, as did the unique and duplicated totals of children involved in CPS reports.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- 27 of the 31 (90%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- Most reports were responded to on time or exceeded policy.
- The Hotline response rate was 100%.
- Some stakeholders indicated the Hotline has helped to standardize screenings.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 4 of the 31 (10%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “needing improvement.” Reports were not investigated within policy timelines. This may be due worker turnover and vacancy rates.
- There were multiple reports without investigation even though the reports were for the same issues.
- The State policy requirement to look at prior reports is not consistently followed.
- Some stakeholders indicated that workers need sufficient training to feel confident in making substantiated determinations and thus removing children to substitute care. The appeals process may be making some workers reluctant to determine substantiation and can be a disincentive for substantiation. Given the amount of time appeals take, the State may need to assess the appeal process.

## Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

#### State Assessment

Arizona performed better than the national standard of 6.1% for recurrence of child maltreatment in calendar year 1999. In 1999, 4.77% of unique children who were the subject of a substantiated or indicated report within the first six months of the calendar year were the subject of another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period. Augmented and improved policy and procedures for investigating reports with prior CPS history, collaboration with other agencies, and the provision of prevention services directly impact the State’s performance in this area. The data appear to indicate that timely provision of preventive services has been effective in preventing recurrent child maltreatment.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- 47 of the 49 (96%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- There were no multiple reports during the period under review in Yavapai or Cochise Counties.
- The vast array of services provided is considered a major factor in reducing maltreatment.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Prior to period under review, there were multiple reports with the same perpetrator and same general issues.

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of Outcome achievement:					
	<b>Team 1</b>	<b>Team 2</b>	<b>Team 3</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	23	9	10	42	91%
Partially Achieved:	3	0	1	4	9%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0	0	0	
Not Applicable:	0	3	1	4	

#### Status of Outcome S2—Substantial Conformity:

Of the 46 applicable cases reviewed, 91% substantially achieved the Outcome, which exceeds the 90% threshold.

#### Item 3. Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

##### State Assessment

Arizona is providing an array of preventive services that have enabled many children to remain in the home. Programs such as Family Builders have assisted families to reduce risk factors that otherwise may have contributed to a removal of a child. This program has also assisted the State in providing a 100% response rate to reports of child abuse and neglect.

Programs such as Family Builders, Project Thrive, Intensive Family Preservation, and Healthy Families provide in-home services to engage families. Parents surveyed identified that in-home services and monitoring is an alternative that could be effective to prevent removal of the children from homes.

Stakeholders who have experience with families where removal was prevented, reported effectiveness in services such as family preservation, Housing Assistance, Healthy Families, Family Builders and in-home services.

The Child Safety Profile data indicate that DES has provided family assessment and case management services to 100% of children and families with a substantiated report, and has provided services, in addition to family assessment and case management, to just less than half of families with a substantiated report. Although Arizona DES has no statutory authority to compel a family to accept voluntary services, DES does routinely refer families to community-based services and other services that are not captured through CHILDS data. DES and child advocacy groups share a concern regarding cases in which allegations are substantiated and services offered, whether provided through the State agency or community agencies, and



are not accepted by families. When a family has access to less intrusive community-based services, further CPS intervention is frequently not warranted. For those families assessed as “at risk,” DES is currently exploring ways to engage parents in services beyond the investigation stage, including reviewing the use of in-home dependency petitions to determine if this approach would be appropriate to better ensure child safety.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 31 of the 32 (97%) applicable cases reviewed were rated “strength.”
- The availability of a diverse array of family preservation and in-home services for families was noted in the case review and stakeholder interviews. These services were noted as comprehensive, family-centered and community- based.
- Services are matched appropriately to reduce risk.
- Services appear to be individualized to meet the families’ needs as noted in the case review and stakeholder interviews.
- Community Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) are useful in assessment and treatment in providing services to the families and children in home and to prevent removal.
- Potential risks are quickly referred to Family Builders for intensive family preservation services.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- In some instances, services that would have been appropriate were not offered.
- Services for at-risk families are optional, so many families refuse them.
- DES and Family Builders need to explore more effective strategies in engaging families in services.
- When cases transfer to other counties, there are time delays in resuming needed services.

### Item 4. Risk of harm to child

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

##### State Assessment

The Child Safety Profile indicates that in calendar year 1999 the duplicate count of children entering foster care after a substantiated or indicated report of child maltreatment was 3,655 (43.7%). The unique child count for children entering foster care during calendar year 1999 after a substantiated or indicated report was 3,282 (42.0%). The percentages of unique and duplicated children entering care after a substantiated report remained the same between calendar years 1999 and 2000. Arizona DES, with community and legislative support and collaboration, has implemented significant home-based service programs to prevent child abuse and neglect and out-of-home placement. These programs positively impact child protection and Arizona DES’s ability to maintain children safely in their own homes.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- 40 of the 44 (91%) applicable cases reviewed were rated “strength.”
- Placement was used as an appropriate intervention to reduce risk.
- The low rate of child maltreatment during the period under review indicates that children kept in homes are generally safe.
- Removal Review and Reunification Review Committees are effective tools for ensuring child safety.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 4 of the 44 (9%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “needing improvement.”
- Some cases reviewed were closed even though there was ongoing risk.
- No follow-up or services were provided in sexual abuse cases.
- There were a significant number of substantiated CPS referrals prior to the period under review noted in the case record review. Although these were dealt with individually, the pattern as a whole was not analyzed and acted upon in protecting the children.
- The case record review noted that the high vacancy rate and case manager turnover may hamper intensity of services because workers do not have time to adequately manage cases. Stakeholders also conveyed this concern.

## II. PERMANENCY

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of Outcome achievement:					
	<b>Team 1</b>	<b>Team 2</b>	<b>Team 3</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	12	5	6	23	74%
Partially Achieved:	2	1	1	4	13%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	1	1	4	13%
Not Applicable:	10	5	4	19	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:</b>					
	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>State's Percentage FFY 1999</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>	
Foster care re-entries	8.6% or fewer	10.7 %		X	
Length of time to achieve reunification	76.2% or more	68.0%		X	
Length of time to achieve adoption	32.0% or more	19.8%		X	
Stability of foster care placements	86.7% or more	81.9%		X	
Length of stay in foster care*		7.38 months			

\*Not used to determine substantial conformity.

### Status of Permanency Outcome P-1: Not in substantial conformity.

Of the 31 applicable cases reviewed, 74% substantially achieved the Outcome, which is below the 90% threshold. The Statewide data indicators for foster care re-entry, length of time to achieve reunification or adoption, and stability of foster care placements also did not meet national standards. Planning and moving towards permanency in a timelier manner for children in care significantly impacted the case record rating of this Outcome. Concurrent planning is not fully implemented and more training is needed in this area. The case record review showed sequential planning for permanency rather than concurrent planning.

### Item 5. Foster care re-entries

\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

Arizona noted that failure to meet the national standard of 8.6% or fewer may be primarily a result of inaccurate data. Specifically, children who are returned on a trial home visit do not have a specified end date and may be erroneously recorded as exiting and then re-entering foster care.

The re-removal data on all children in care the last day of FFY 1999 and FFY 2000 indicate roughly 3% or fewer have had more than two removal episodes according to the State. However, between the 2 years there is a slight increase in both the percentages of children with more than one removal episode and in children entering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. Based on the Data Profile and the case record review Arizona failed to meet the national standard for foster care re-entries.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 29 of the 31 (94%) applicable cases reviewed were rated “strength.”
- Intensive family preservation services (e.g., parenting skills, family and individual counseling) were often provided for 8 to 16 weeks, and often beginning the day the child returned home. These services appeared to be successful in preventing children from re-entering care and supported reunification efforts.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Re-entries into foster care during the period under review were a result of the same child abuse/neglect reason.

### Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

##### State Assessment

AFCARS data indicate that of all children served during the FFY who have been in out-of-home care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, 81.9% in FFY 1999, 84.2% in FFY 2000 had been in no more than 2 placement settings. The AFCARS data indicate Arizona is close to meeting the national standard of 86.7% or more of all children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal had no more than 2 placement settings.

Arizona’s analysis of the data extraction methods shows that the current data underestimate the number of children with 2 or fewer placements. DES has identified a need to further refine the extraction method for number of placement setting data. The current data extraction methods do not consider the start and end dates of each placement entry in CHILDS, but simply count every placement entry for the child that is with a unique provider. Therefore, if 2 or more placement entries for a child cover the same dates, even if the dates of one completely encompass the other, both entries will be counted.

The resulting over-count is exacerbated by unpaid placement entries, for which CHILDS requires less detailed information. For example, if a child in an unpaid “relative” placement runs away, then returns to the same unpaid relative, the program can not determine that the child returned to the *same* relative, and therefore counts the relative’s home as two placements.

The increased availability of in-home and other services to support reunification and voluntary relative placements have had some success in the percentage of children experiencing two or fewer placements.

Data also indicate the presence of an older population of children for whom stability and permanency have been challenging to achieve. Arizona recognizes the importance of evaluating the needs of these youth and developing services to meet those needs. The primary need for many youth is for behavioral health services that the parents, guardian ad litem, or probation officer have been unsuccessful in obtaining through the juvenile justice or mental health systems.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 22 of the 31 (71%) foster care cases reviewed were rated as “strength.” These children did not experience multiple placements during the period under review. Cases that had multiple placements were directly related to helping children achieve their case plan goal.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 9 children in the cases reviewed experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review that were not directly related to helping achieve the case plan goal. This suggests that failure to achieve the indicator is not due entirely to a data quality issue. Of the 9 cases with multiple placements, 4 children were ages 13-15; 2 were age 11; 1 was 8 years old; and 1 child was 1 year old. 7 of the 9 had special behavioral or medical needs. The case record data indicate that these children are older and have special needs.
- There is a need to prepare and support foster families to meet the special needs of children in care, especially the development of therapeutic homes. Although many foster parents received support services to assist in maintaining placements, such as counseling, respite care, and casework services, the primary reason for the disrupted placements was due to inadequately preparing and/or supporting the foster parents. In some instances, the children were removed for minor behavioral infractions. In 2 cases, the out-of-state placements were disrupted due to lack of financial support and medical services to meet the child’s needs.
- There is a need to develop more family foster homes, especially for infants, that can care for children in emergencies and accommodate frequent visiting. It was noted in the case record review that children, including infants, often were placed into a shelter care group home setting either immediately upon entry into foster care or between disruptions in foster family home settings. In one case, the shelter care was used specifically to enable the parent to visit the infant daily because family foster homes in the area might not be able to accommodate such frequent visiting.

### Item 7. Permanency goal for child

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

AFCARS data on children in care the last day of FFY 1999 and FFY 2000 show a substantial increase in the number and percentage of children with a reunification permanency goal, from 20.3% in 1999 to 33.5% in FFY 2000. At the same time, the number of children with adoption as a permanency goal has decreased from 40.2% to 32.1%.

The fact that 50% of children who discharged from foster care to reunification or relative placement during FFY 2000 discharged in 2.9 months or less suggests the enhanced reunification services, particularly in-home services, are effectively increasing the number of children moving quickly out of foster care to reunification or relative placement. The Subsidized Guardianship and Kinship Care Programs and the implementation of Family Group Decision Making in four counties have also supported reunification and non-adoptive relative placement.

Data on time to achieve reunification indicate 68% of children reunified in FFY 1999, and 71.4% of children in FFY 2000 were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of latest removal. Although slightly below the national standard of 76.2%, the rate is improving. Data for FFY 1999 and FFY 2000 regarding length of time to achieve permanency goal indicate the median months to discharge to reunification/relative placement is much shorter than discharge for other reasons. The median length of time to achieve discharge to reunification or relative placement decreased from 4 months in FFY 1999 to 2.9 in FFY 2000.

Arizona is concerned that element IX of the Point-in-time Permanency Profile may underestimate the State's success at reunifying in under 12 months. In the permanency profile, the reunification/relative placement category includes children with a discharge reason of "live with other relatives," which includes children who exit care to relative guardianship. The Subsidized Permanent Guardianship program has increased the number of children exiting care to relative guardianship from at least 287 in FFY 1999 to at least 306 in FFY 2000. The time required to achieve guardianship is longer than the time to achieve reunification; therefore, it raises the median length of time to achieve reunification and reduces the number achieving in 12 months or less. Since Arizona did not resubmit the FFY 1999 AFCARS data for this element, the determination is that Arizona did not meet the national standard for the element IX of the Point-in-time Permanency Profile.

*American Indian Children:* State data indicate approximately 80% of American Indian children who discharged from foster care in FFY 1999 and FFY 2000 left by reason of reunification or relative placement (including relative guardianship), slightly more than the percentage of all children in the State who discharged to reunification or relative placement.

Many adopted children are adopted by relatives. Therefore, more than 80% of American Indian children leaving foster care have achieved permanency within a placement of the highest preference according to ICWA.

American Indian children are more likely than the general out-of-home population to have a permanency goal of reunification or live with other relatives (which includes relative guardianship). The combined 2 categories included 37.3% of American Indian children in FFY 1999, compared to 30.6% of all children, and 50.3% of American Indian children in FFY 2000, compared to 42.1% of all children. American Indian children are less likely to have a goal of adoption, and slightly more likely to have permanency goals of long-term foster care and guardianship (which includes children with a goal of non-relative guardianship only). These differences are consistent with the intent of the ICWA to achieve permanency within

American Indian homes that reflect the unique values of American Indian culture.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 23 of the 31 (74%) foster care cases were rated as “strength” because the child’s permanency goal was either achieved and/or, if not achieved, services provided were consistent with the permanency goal.
- The cases that achieved permanency had the following:
  - Petitions for terminating parental rights (TPR) for children in care 15 of the most recent 20 months are generally filed timely.
  - In a majority of cases, the permanency goal was appropriate and the services provided matched the goal.
- Of the 31 foster care cases, the permanency goal for 12 children was reunification, 7 of which achieved reunification. 6 of the 7 children were reunified in 12 months or less.
- Stakeholders reported that mediation is used effectively to diffuse families’ anger and animosity about the process as well as facilitate movement toward achieving permanency goals. Mediation is used both at the front end of cases to aid case planning as well as at the back end to facilitate permanency.
- Stakeholders consistently noted that implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act permanency timeframes and Model Court practice (one family—one judge) has aided immensely in expediting permanency for children.
- Case review noted that the court-approved written agreements used to identify long-term foster care as a permanency goal have strengthened foster parents’ commitment to the youth and promotes a sense of stability and permanency for the youth.
- Stakeholders reported that subsidized guardianships are aiding in moving children into permanency.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 8 of the 31 (26%) foster care cases reviewed were rated as “needing improvement.” There was inadequate case planning, and services provided did not always match the identified placement goal. There were excessive delays in achieving the most recent permanency goal, in filing a petition to terminate parental rights, in finalizing adoptions, and/or finding specialized adoptive homes to place children with severe behavioral challenges. 1 case demonstrated a failure to follow the Indian Child Welfare Act procedures.
- Concurrent planning is not fully implemented, and workers and foster parents need additional training in this area.
- A lack of services in the community appeared to delay reunification.
- Stakeholders reported that the high case manager turnover is affecting child permanency efforts.

#### Item 8. Independent living services

☒X\_ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

To determine compliance with the case planning requirements, DES randomly reviewed 48 cases from Arizona's FFY 2000 AFCARS data. Each case was reviewed for a one-year period beginning October 1, 1999 or the case opening, whichever was later. Written case plans were found in CHILDS in 100% of the cases reviewed. Fourteen of the case plans reviewed involved a child age 16 or older. Of these, 13 included a description of programs or services to help prepare the child for independent living. In the remaining case, the child's permanency goal was family reunification and subsequently changed to independent living; the subsequent case plan included a description of independent living services. Based on the cases reviewed by DES, youth with a permanency goal of independent living have an independent living plan in the case plan. And children who are at least 15 years old frequently wish to live independently while maintaining relationships with their biological family.

### On-site

Strengths:

- Of the 31 foster care cases reviewed, only 2 were age 16 or older. 1 of the 2 youth had a written Independent Living Plan in the case record and was provided services consistent with the plan.
- During case record review, it was noted that IL services were provided to siblings of the targeted child.
- Youth are allowed to sign a voluntary placement agreement to stay in foster care until age 21.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- 1 of the 2 youth did not have an Independent Living Plan.
- Stakeholders also reported a perception that youth 16 and older are not receiving independent living services.

### Item 9. Adoption

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

Data on length of time to achieve adoption indicate that of all children who exited care to a finalized adoption during FFY 1999, 19.8% exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from the home. In FFY 2000, this number decreased to 18.4%. Both are below the national standard of 32%. The data indicate that in both FFY 1999 and FFY 2000 approximately 18% of exiting children were discharged to a finalized adoption. The median months to discharge decreased slightly from FFY 1999 to FFY 2000, from 38.6 months to 37.4 months.



## On-site

### Strengths:

- 8 of the 14 (57%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- Children freed for adoption are not experiencing delays in adoption of greater than 60 days.
- Children who were not yet free for adoption did not experience delays of greater than 60 days to be legally free or if there were delays, they were beyond the agency’s control.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 6 of the 14 (43%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “needing improvement” because there were delays:
  - ✓ in finalizing adoptions due to disruptions because pre-adoptive families were not adequately prepared to meet a child’s special needs;
  - ✓ in scheduling hearings to terminate parental rights with no apparent justifiable reasons; and
  - ✓ in completing birth certificates, home studies, criminal record checks, and subsidy paperwork.
- The delays were attributed to increased workloads, backlogs in adoption cases, lack of effective concurrent planning, and/or lack of attention to effectively address behavioral, attachment and bonding issues.

## Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

\_\_X\_\_ Strength             Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

#### State Assessment

Data produced by DES to look at number and percentage of children in out-of-home care showed that in FFY 1999 45.3% of the children in the foster care population and 38.4% in FFY 2000 had the goal of independent living. These children are at least 15 years old and frequently wish to live independently, while maintaining relationships with their biological family and significant others while in long-term foster care. Many of these children are dually adjudicated youth (both delinquent and dependent). Arizona estimated that 18% of foster care admissions within Maricopa County for FFY 2000 are dually adjudicated youth. Maricopa County encompasses 50% of the State foster care population. State data appear to indicate that the dually adjudicated youth population in out-of-home care is increasing and will have an impact on the number of children in long-term foster care, especially in Maricopa County.

Achieving permanency plans of adoption or guardianship for older youth in foster care presents challenges for Arizona. Stakeholders who responded to survey questions regarding services to support permanency planning indicated that permanency planning efforts are being made, but also cited concerns that permanency plans of adoption or guardianship are at times not sought for older children.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- Of the four cases sampled that identified a permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (one was relative guardianship, one was independent living, and two were long-term foster care), all were rated as strength because more permanent goals had been and continue to be considered for the child. Additionally, the services provided are consistent with the identified goal.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

None identified

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of Outcome achievement:					
	<b>Team 1</b>	<b>Team 2</b>	<b>Team 3</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	12	6	7	25	81%
Partially Achieved:	3	1	1	5	16%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	0	0	1	3%
Not Applicable:	10	5	4	19	

### Status of Permanency Outcome P-2: Not in substantial conformity.

Of the 31 applicable cases reviewed, 81% substantially achieved the Outcome, which is below the 90% threshold. Overall, the agency supports and preserves family connections between child and parents, siblings and relatives. However, the efforts in preserving connections such as visitation schedules between parent and child and child and siblings were not always consistent and needs improvement.

### Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

#### State Assessment

State policy requires that children be placed in the least restrictive type of placement available, consistent with his or her placement needs, including close proximity to where the child goes to school and parent's home. Arizona data indicate that the majority of young children are in the least restrictive, family-like settings.

The largest group of placements used outside of a family-like setting is emergency shelter placements. These shelters ensure easily accessible placements to enable child safety, provide the ability to assess the long-term placement needs of children, and are sometimes able to facilitate frequent and flexible on-site parent-child visitation.

To facilitate placement in the least restrictive setting, some districts hold regularly scheduled meetings of case managers and contracted agency staff to share information on children needing placement and available foster families.

#### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 28 of the 29 (97%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as "strength."
- This item is considered a consistent and substantial strength across the entire State.

- In cases where children were not placed in close proximity, there were clearly documented and well reasoned decisions that out-of-area placements were due to the needs of the children. Relative placement and specialized treatment were reasons for out-of-area placements.
- DES facilitated family visitation for a child with an incarcerated parent.
- School transportation was provided in order for a child to remain in the same school despite a placement in another county.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

None identified.

### Item 12. Placement with siblings

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

#### State Assessment

State policy requires that children be placed in the least restrictive type of placement available, consistent with his or her placement needs. Relatives are the placement of preference for all children, and case managers are required to make efforts to place siblings together unless there is documented evidence that placement together is detrimental to one of the children.

#### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 13 of the 15 (87%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- This item is considered a consistent and substantial strength across the entire State with few exceptions.
- Concerted efforts were made to keep siblings together.
- When siblings were not placed together, it was in the best interests of the children and case files were well documented with agency decisions.
- In many cases, services were provided to keep siblings in the same placement.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Services were not always provided when necessary to keep siblings in the same placement.
- Lack of available foster homes limited opportunities for sibling placement.

### Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

State Assessment

See item number 14 below for information on parent and child contact requirements.

On-site

Strengths:

- 21 of the 26 (81%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.” The agency consistently supports visitation, even though parents choose not to cooperate.
- Visitation arrangements were facilitated by the agency for a child with an incarcerated parent in another county.
- Support of visitation schedules was evident by foster parents and relatives.
- Visitation plans were not developed when documentation showed visitation was not in the best interest of the child.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- Visitation schedules were not always facilitated by the agency. In some cases, visitation was occurring only because of the efforts of foster parents and relatives.
- Although visitation was occurring, case files did not contain visitation plans. In other cases, documentation was lacking as to why visits were not occurring, contrary to the visitation plan. The lack of documentation can hinder ability to abandon reunification as a permanency goal when necessary.
- In one case, shelter care was used specifically to enable the parent to visit the infant daily because family foster homes in the area might not be able to accommodate such frequent visitation. There is a need to develop more family foster homes, especially for infants, that can care for children in emergencies and accommodate frequent visiting.

Item 14. Preserving connections

  X   Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Basis:  
State Assessment

**PARENTS**

<b>CHILD'S PERMANENCY GOAL</b>	<b>CONTACT REQUIREMENT</b>
FAMILY REUNIFICATION OR REMAIN WITH FAMILY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• at least once a month</li><li>• including any alleged parents, parents residing outside of the child's home, and incarcerated parents</li><li>• if the child is placed in-home under a dependency, contact with the child and parent(s) in the home at least once a month</li></ul>
ALL OTHER PERMANENCY GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• at minimum, quarterly telephone contact or written correspondence with all parents whose whereabouts are known and whose rights have not been terminated</li></ul>

For additional information, see items 11- Proximity of Foster Care Placement and 12 – Placement with Siblings.

On-site

Strengths:

- 27 of the 31 (87%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- Efforts were often made to help children keep connections to their community by enabling the child to attend the same school, after school events, sports and youth events.
- In some cases, the agency made concerted efforts to maintain connections between Native American children and their Tribal communities by making arrangements to enable the child to attend tribal events and ceremonies.
- Stakeholders report that tribes have been brought in to do cultural assessments in some Districts.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- In some cases, the agency did not explore a relationship between the child and a significant parental figure.
- Compliance with ICWA is not always consistent with the intent or spirit of the law from District to District. Efforts were not always made to determine the applicability of ICWA.

Item 15. Relative placement

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

Relatives are the placement of preference based on Arizona policy.

DES has noted a drop in children placed in relative placements on the last day of the FFY. They feel this may be due to growing emphasis on placement prevention and early reunification services, such as Family Group Decision Making. One hypothesis is that children from families with supportive extended family are often reunified or placed with relatives through these services, and therefore, a greater percentage of children remaining in care do not have relatives who are willing and able to care for them. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that 72% of children discharged during both FFY 1999 and FFY 2000 discharged to reunification or non-adoptive relative placement.

Also, the State allows relatives to either pursue licensure and/or be an unpaid court approved kinship placement. This option given to relatives is believed by DES to enable more children to be placed with relatives.

*American Indian Children:* Approximately one quarter of American Indian children in out-of-home care on the last day of each FFY were placed in relative homes. The data indicate American Indian children have approximately the same relative placement rate as other children in out-of-home care, perhaps because kinship care is the placement preference for all children, as it is for American Indian children. The largest percentage, 41.7% in FFY 1999 and 37.3% in FFY 2000, of American Indian children was placed in non-relative foster homes, because few licensed foster parents are American Indian caregivers.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 27 of the 31 (87%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- DES explored and made relative placement in many cases.
- In those cases where placement was not with a relative, the agency ruled out relative placement for appropriate reasons.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- In those cases where this wasn’t a strength, case files often lacked documentation as to whether relatives were either sought or considered as placement sources.
- When relatives were considered, the agency did not always document the reasons relatives were excluded as a placement source.

### Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

State Assessment

See item 14 – Preserving Connections

On-site

Strengths:

- 19 of 20 (95%) applicable cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- This item is considered a consistent and substantial strength across the entire State.
- When not detrimental to the child, the agency encourages familial relationships.
- It is evident that significant efforts were made to maintain positive relationships between parent and child when appropriate.
- Services were made available to parents to help strengthen parent/child relationships.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- None identified.



### III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of Outcome achievement:					
	<b>Team 1</b>	<b>Team 2</b>	<b>Team 3</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	16	10	9	35	70%
Partially Achieved:	7	2	2	11	22%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	3	0	1	4	8%
Not Applicable:	0	0	0	0	

#### Status of Outcome WB-1: Not in substantial conformity.

Of the 50 applicable cases reviewed, 70% of the cases substantially achieved the Outcome, which is below the 90% threshold. Evidence of active involvement of parents in the development of case plans and the involvement of older children in the development of their case plans was lacking. The need for more specialized mental health services to address the unique needs of children and families was also an area needing improvement.

#### Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

##### State Assessment

An individualized case plan is required for every child in out-of-home care. For all parents whose parental rights have not been terminated and guardians for the child, the family intervention plan component of the case plan specifies services aimed at addressing the risk factors that caused the child to be removed from the home and/or prevent the child from living safely at home without DES's involvement. This family intervention plan specifies the responsibilities of the entire service team in achieving the Outcomes necessary to enable the family to safely and appropriately care for the child.

Case management services, parent aide, parent skills training classes, mental health programs, housing assistance program, intensive in-home services, substance abuse treatment program, family group decision making program, promoting safe and stable families community-based family-centered services, community resources – support and emergency assistance, and the 300 Kids Project are some of the services that are provided to families.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- 36 of the 50 (72%) cases reviewed were rated as “strength.”
- Services were offered to the families that matched the reasons necessitating DES involvement.
- In-home cases as well as reunified cases were typically provided an array of services through family preservation to maintain children with their families.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 14 of the 50 (28%) cases reviewed were rated as “needing improvement.”
- Children who were victim of sexual abuse as a primary reason for entering care or where sexual abuse was disclosed later, seem to have less opportunity to have those needs fully assessed and services provided. Of 5 cases in which sexual abuse occurred and service needs identified, full sexual abuse assessments were not completed and services were not provided to address sexual abuse issues.
- There was a lack of assessment of the needs of non-custodial fathers who may be possible caregivers.
- Child needs, such as grief and loss treatments, were often either not addressed or there was difficulty providing these services. Several cases were referred to the Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) for services but were delayed or denied services.
- Stakeholders indicated that the children and families are not receiving the needed specialized mental health services, especially for children with emotional disturbances and victims of sexual abuse.

## Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

#### State Assessment

Parents are invited and encouraged to attend all case plan staffings, and Court and Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) hearings. In addition, DES’s policy requires case managers to invite parental participation in the identification of strengths, needs, progress, goals, and services during contacts.

The Family Group Decision Making Program (FGDMP) has effectively increased parental and extended family participation in case planning by giving control for the development of safety, placement, and service plans to the family in cases deemed appropriate. This program is currently available in two of six districts and is expanding Statewide by October 2001. The growing familiarity of staff with the FGDMP has lead many case managers to employ similar techniques with families who are not referred to the actual FGDMP.

Focus group and survey results indicate that parents are provided the opportunity to participate in case planning during staffings, court hearings, and case manager contacts.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- 31 of 46 (67%) applicable cases reviewed were rated “strength.”
- When cases were rated “strength,” they typically had parent and/or caregiver participation in case planning.
- Efforts were made to encourage parent participation. In at least 1 case, mediation was used to resolve problems that inhibited participation by the parent in case planning.
- Parents were aware of services available as specified in the case plan.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 15 of the 46 (33%) applicable cases reviewed were rated “area needing improvement.”
- Many cases lacked evidence that parents were active participants in developing the case plan.
- More than half of the cases in which children were old enough to be involved in case plan development lacked child participation. 7 cases involved children 12 and older; 1 case involved an 11 year-old. None of the children had any disabilities that would have prevented their involvement in case plan development.
- There was a lack of updating or changing the case plan when the case goal changed. Delays in revising case plans were noted.
- The quality of the case plans and the lack of individualization may be due to worker turnover and vacancy rates.

### Item 19. Worker visits with child

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:  
State Assessment

<b>CHILDREN AND CARE PROVIDERS CHILD PLACEMENT</b>	<b>CONTACT REQUIREMENT</b>
IN-HOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• with the child and parent(s) in the home at least once a month</li></ul>
OUT-OF-HOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• with the child and care provider at least once a month</li><li>• once every three months with the child and provider, together, in the provider's home</li></ul>
EMERGENCY SHELTER OR RECEIVING FOSTER HOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• face-to-face every two weeks</li><li>• telephone contact every other week</li></ul>

A supervisor may approve exceptions to monthly face-to-face contact with a parent under certain conditions, with an alternative method in place for communicating with the parent (e.g., incarcerated parent in a distant part of the State).

Focus groups and surveys show clear improvement in the percentage of children and parents receiving face-to-face contact.

On-site

Strengths:

- 41 of the 50 (82%) cases were rated “strength.”
- In many cases, the number of contacts with the child exceeded the State’s requirements.
- Many families receiving family preservation services were seen at least monthly, sometimes more by DES and at least weekly by the family preservation provider.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- 9 of the 50 (18%) cases were rated “needing improvement,” as visits by caseworkers did not meet DES policy.
- In the largest metropolitan area, in some cases there was significant time lag between termination of family preservation services and DES closing the case. Follow-up assessments including visits with the family to insure that family needs had been addressed were lacking.

## Item 20. Worker visits with parents

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

#### State Assessment

See item number 19 above for contact and visitation requirements for parent and child.

#### On-site

##### Strengths:

- 28 of the 38 (79%) applicable cases reviewed were rated “ strength.”
- In Cochise County, 100% (7 of 7) of the eligible cases were rated as “strength.”
- Case managers are meeting or exceeding the required number of contacts with parents.

##### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 10 of the 38 (26%) applicable cases were rated “needing improvement,” as visits by case worker did not meet DES policy.
- In some cases, there were delays up to several months before cases were closed following termination of family preservation services. This was especially noted in the on-site case review in the metropolitan area.
- There were sporadic visits by DES when family preservation services were in place.
- In at least 2 cases, fathers were not visited even though they were active in the life of the child.

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of Outcome achievement:					
	<b>Team 1</b>	<b>Team 2</b>	<b>Team 3</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	14	9	11	34	85%
Partially Achieved:	2	0	0	2	5%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	3	1	0	4	10%
Not Applicable:	7	2	1	10	

Status of Outcome WB-2: Not in substantial conformity.

Of the 40 applicable cases reviewed, 85% substantially achieved the Outcome, which is below the 90% threshold. The educational needs of children were not consistently addressed Statewide.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

**Basis:**

State Assessment

The educational needs and status of each child in out-of-home care are reviewed in case plan staffings held within 60 days of case opening and at least every 6 months thereafter. Educational conditions, grade level and the school name are documented in the case plan. The case plan also includes documentation of desired educational outcomes and related tasks in the out-of-home care plan component.

Foster parents are required to send foster children to public school unless an alternative educational arrangement is approved in the child's case plan.

Comments from focus groups and surveys of case managers, CASAs, judges, attorneys, foster parents and other stakeholder groups on the effectiveness of DES in responding to the educational needs of children in foster care were varied. Both positive and negative experiences were reported from each community and from each type of respondent.

Arizona indicated their data reflect that the basic educational needs of children in foster care are adequately met and routinely monitored. However, for foster children who need special education services, the State continues to face some challenges in ensuring that timely assessments are completed and services provided.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- 34 of the 40 (85%) applicable cases were rated “strength.”
- Children were found to have had educational needs assessed and appropriate educational services provided such as IEP, psycho-educational evaluations, GED services, IQ testing and special education classes.
- In some cases, it was found that caregivers were given copies of educational records and surrogate parents were appointed to advocate for children’s educational needs.
- The 2 rural counties reviewed accomplished a greater than 90% achievement rate on this indicator. At both sites, it was noted that there was evidence of strong collaboration between the agency and the school in order to creatively address the educational needs of children and that caseworkers, foster parents and other service providers were strong advocates for the educational needs of children in care.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 6 of the 40 (15%) applicable cases were rated “needing improvement.”
- For children in foster care, frequent changes in school settings due to disruptive placements impacted educational needs negatively. Additionally, lack of assessment, failure of the agency to address educational needs in the service plan and lack of advocating for educational needs led to ratings of “area needing improvement.”
- For the in-home cases, it was noted that the children’s identified educational needs were not addressed by the agency.

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of Outcome achievement:					
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	13	8	8	29	59.2%
Partially Achieved:	10	4	4	18	36.7%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	0	0	2	4.1%
Not Applicable:	1	0	0	1	

#### Status of Outcome WB-3: Not in substantial conformity.

Of the 49 applicable cases reviewed, 59.2% substantially achieved the Outcome, which is below the 90% threshold. Many children are not receiving needed services. Initial health screenings were not always completed and families were unable to access needed services and/or follow-up services.

#### Item 22. Physical health of the child

\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

#### State Assessment

Most children in Arizona's foster care system receive health care coverage through the Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program (CMDP), a program within DES. CMDP operates as an acute care health plan under the auspices of Arizona's Medicaid agency, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Children who are placed in out-of-home care with unlicensed non-relatives receive health care coverage from other AHCCCS contracted health plans.

EPSDT services are covered services for all children in out-of-home care. A comprehensive medical examination that meets EPSDT requirements is required within 30 days of a child's initial placement in out-of-home care. DES policy also requires annual medical and semi-annual dental exams. The case manager and out-of-home caregiver are responsible for ensuring that any follow-up care or referrals for services are provided. A Foster Children Medical Examination Pilot Project in Pima and Cochise Counties requires this initial comprehensive examination to be completed within 14 days of initial placement.

Each child's health and medical needs are routinely reviewed as part of the case planning process. The case plan document includes outcomes and tasks to meet the child's medical needs as part of the out-of-home care plan. Policy requires all known information pertaining to a child's medical history be documented and provided to out-of-home care providers through a medical summary report generated in CHILDS. However, the on-site review noted that agency failed to provide foster parents with full packets upon placements, and foster parents were often without the medical and/or



dental history of the children in their care. Similarly, there was often a lack of adequate, up-to-date medical information found in case records.

The State feels that there have been many opportunities for close coordination and the flexibility to respond to the unique health care needs of foster children, because the child welfare agency and the program providing health care coverage to foster children are part of the same State agency. Based on the CMDP immunization records and feedback from focus groups and surveys, Arizona is successfully providing quality health care services to children in foster care.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 31 of the 44 (70%) applicable cases were rated “strength.”
- In these cases, it was found that both children in foster care and children receiving in-home services were receiving initial health screenings according to State policy, regular medical and dental check-ups, including immunizations and preventative care, and follow-up care as needed.
- 

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- 13 of the 44 (30%) applicable cases were rated “needing improvement.”
- In many of the cases, it was found that the agency failed to provide foster parents with full packets upon placements and foster parents were often without the medical and/or dental history of the children in their care. Similarly, there was often a lack of adequate, up-to-date medical information found in case records. This finding does not support the State policy found in the Statewide Assessment.
- In some of the cases, the agency failed to complete the initial medical assessment as required by State policy.
- In the more rural counties, difficulty in accessing medical and dental services was found to be a barrier to children receiving needed health and dental care due to the lack of providers and transportation issues.
- It was found that follow-up monitoring of children’s medical needs was often lacking for children whose families were receiving in-home services.
- In cases involving allegations of sexual abuse, physical examinations were not performed on the children to substantiate abuse issues. There were a significant number of cases reviewed that had sexual abuse issues.

### Item 23. Mental health of the child

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

#### State Assessment

Arizona policy requires that the behavioral health needs of children served by DES be assessed within 21 days of a case opening, and reassessed at the initial and subsequent case plan staffings. The Statewide implementation of Arizona’s Model Court program further strengthened the requirement for comprehensive initial assessments by mandating that they be completed prior to the initial Court hearing.

Funding for behavioral health services for children in foster care comes from a variety of sources, and therefore services are accessed through different channels depending upon the eligibility of the child and the type of service requested. Most children in foster care are Title XIX-eligible. For these Title XIX-eligible children, behavioral health services are accessed through local Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (RBHAs). The Arizona Department of Health Services contracts with RBHAs for a managed care delivery system of behavioral health services for all of Arizona's Title XIX eligible residents. Each RBHA, in turn, contracts with service providers or provider networks to coordinate and deliver direct services. DES case managers work within the referral parameters of the local RBHA to refer eligible children for RBHA covered behavioral health services.

The system as it exists today, based on the Statewide Assessment and on-site review, is frustrating for case managers due to the layers of bureaucracy involved, multiple processes for obtaining services, differing criteria for determining necessity and appropriateness of services requested, lack of qualified providers, and ultimate delays in obtaining services. All of these concerns are targeted in DES's plan for system reform.

Although the State's current process for assessing and addressing the mental health needs of children in foster care is recognized as an area in need of improvement, the plans and mechanisms in place to bring about much needed change are viewed as a strength in that there is a great deal of collaboration, cooperation, and innovation, as well as judicial and Executive Committee oversight to promote successful reform.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- 26 of the 39 (67%) applicable cases were rated "strength."
- In many cases, mental health assessments were completed as required by State policy and services were provided to meet children's mental health needs. Services provided included psychological evaluations, ongoing counseling, screening and assessment, and medication monitoring.
- One of the rural sites reviewed achieved the 90% threshold for this indicator. It was noted that not only were assessments and recommended services being provided, but individualized services were offered to children and youth including: grief and loss, sexual offender treatment, and substance abuse treatment. Additionally, in at least 1 case it was noted that strong coordination between the in-home service provider and probation had a direct bearing on the child's receipt of appropriate, needed mental health services.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Barriers exist to meeting children's health needs including the inability of the agency to secure assessment for children, refusal of providers to serve children, lack of mental health assessment, delays in assessment, referral and treatment, and lack of coordinated services.
- Of the cases in which sexual abuse was an issue, assessment and treatment were lacking.
- Individualized services, such as substance abuse for children and attachment and bonding therapy, were lacking.
- For the in-home cases, there was a lack of follow-up treatment for identified needs.

## Part 2: Seven Systemic Factors

### I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4

This systematic factor is rated "4" and is in substantial conformity.

CHILDS is a very sophisticated data system that has the capacity to determine status, demographics, locations and goals for children in foster care.

Item 24. State is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

#### State Assessment

The ability of Arizona's statewide information system to determine the status, demographics, locations, and goals for children in foster care has been demonstrated through penalty free AFCARS transmissions. CHILDS also produces similar aggregated data, which expand on information from AFCARS for mandated reports to the Arizona legislature and DES-ACYF staff for analysis and program evaluation.

#### On-site

Strengths:

- CHILDS is a very sophisticated data system that has the capacity to determine status, demographics, locations and goals for children in foster care.
- Stakeholder interviews of the State level child welfare staff indicated that aggregated data could be generated all across the State.
- Managers indicated that they find the data useful for supervising case work and program evaluation.
- Caseworkers see CHILDS as a useful tool to complete case work.
- The Court and FCRB that assist Arizona in oversight responsibilities indicated that they have access to CHILDS.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholder interviews indicated a need to simplify the flow of the CHILDS program screens to improve the ease of use. The screens are cumbersome and require navigation expertise. Data entry corrections are difficult, and there is an information gap in tribal identification.
- The need for a reduction of case management workload and the time required for CHILDS data entry was also identified in the stakeholder interviews. Staff sometimes has to choose between data entry and seeing clients due to the increased staff time needed for data entry/documentation.
- The need to upgrade hardware, software and increased ability to log into the system from home was expressed in the stakeholder interviews.
- The need to improve Help support and training and one-on-one training were also noted.
- There is also a need to develop a caseworker alert when a status check is done on an in-home case due to a CPS report to the Hotline. Sometimes there are multiple low risk reports that may result in high risk, but the caseworker is unaware of the reports unless the worker does a status referral check on the case because they are not automatically alerted of the unsubstantiated allegations . Multiple allegations, even if unsupported at investigation, often preceded substantiated instances of abuse of neglect.

## II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4

This systematic factor is rated "3" and is in substantial conformity.

More consistency is needed involving both the child and families in the case planning, especially children that are old enough to be involved in the case plan development.

Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

The case review data collected from Arizona's DES random sample of 40 children indicated that nearly all case plans contain the Federally required elements. Rates of compliance were especially high in the identification of reunification services, placement types, independent living services, and safety plans. Further, the FCRB found each element it reviews to be present in more than 99% of case plans. Case record review and Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) data indicates that Arizona is complying with the requirement that children in out-of-home care have written case plans

### On-site

Strengths:

- Case plans are complete and address needs of the child and family and are appropriate for the case plan goal. Case plans are usually developed jointly with parents at case staffings, which are done within 5 – 7 days of placement.
- The courts and the FCRB have electronic access to the case plans.
- Model Court facilitates the initial case plan development with focus on visitation, services and placements. The Model Court expedites court processes and timeframes for initial assessments, case plan development, and delivery of services.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Case record review noted that concurrent plans are developed, but not implemented consistently due to worker turnover and vacancy rates.
- Inconsistency in the quality of the case plans and the lack of case plan individualization were noted in both the on-site case review and stakeholder interviews. It appears this is due to worker turnover and vacancy rates resulting in higher caseloads per worker and less worker attention to the specifics of each case.
- Case record review indicated that more consistency is needed in involving both the child and families in the case planning. More than half of the cases reviewed on-site in which children were old enough to be involved in case plan development lacked child participation.
- Educational and health information are not consistently addressed in case plans.

Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

#### State Assessment

Administrative reviews are conducted by the FCRB at least once every six months after the disposition hearing. Foster Care Review Boards are comprised of citizen volunteers who review, at least every six months, the case of each child in foster care to determine and advise the juvenile court of the adequacy of efforts and progress toward placement of a child in a permanent home; to encourage and facilitate the return of each dependent child to his/her family whenever possible; to promote and encourage stability in the child's placement; and to assist in informing parents and others of their rights and responsibilities regarding a dependent child in foster care. The case manager is required to provide written notice of intent to accept or not implement the Board's recommendations within ten business days of receipt. The court is required to review FCRB findings and recommendations and to address the recommendations on the record at the next scheduled hearing, thus connecting the court and FCRB hearings into a cohesive and comprehensive review process.

The random sample of the 40 children that DES reviewed indicates 97.8% of cases meet the Federally permitted timeframe for compliance with court and administrative reviews.

#### On-site

- The 6 month periodic review completed by the FCRB are noted as timely, substantive and inclusive by the stakeholder interviews and case record review.
- Stakeholder interviews indicated that there is a good system of check and balance in place through judicial review of the FCRB findings and

recommendations.

- Model Court exemplifies effective review mechanisms.

### Areas Needing Improvement

None identified.

Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

Arizona statute requires a permanency hearing be held within 12 months of the child's initial removal from the parent or guardian, or within 30 days of the disposition hearing, if reunification services were found to be contrary to the child's best interest and not ordered. Permanency planning hearings and findings of reasonable efforts to finalize the permanent plan are at times consolidated with report and review hearings or other hearings for effective workload management.

The case review data from the random sample of 40 children conducted by DES indicated 97.5% of the children were the subject of a court hearing that resulted in a finding of reasonable effort to finalize the permanent plan, which was made within federally required timeframes.

### On-site

Strengths:

- Local stakeholder interviews indicated that the Model Court is effective in expediting court processes and timeframes..
- Internal and external stakeholder interviews indicated that the judges, attorneys and workers are all well aware of the ASFA timeframes for permanency hearings. This has had a positive impact on mobilizing services to move children to permanency.
- Case record review indicates pre-hearing mediation leads to substantive and efficient permanency hearings.
- The case record review noted that the permanency hearings are effective in achieving case plan goals.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- Case record review indicated a need to improve consistency of timeliness of permanency hearings, which are delayed due to many continuances.
- Stakeholder interviews noted that staff turnover, judge rotation and tight court calendars affect timeliness for moving children toward permanency goals.

Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

State Assessment

In July 1998, the termination of parental rights (TPR) process in Arizona was streamlined in conjunction with other court improvements. For children entering care after July 1, 1998, the dependency and TPR processes were joined, eliminating the need for a separate petition and hearing process for TPR. A lengthy report, which had previously been required prior to filing the TPR petition, was also eliminated. Now, if it is determined during the permanency planning hearing that adoption is the appropriate plan, the court may order a motion for TPR be filed within ten days.

On-site

Strengths:

- Stakeholders indicated that there is a process in place for TPR and that it is meeting the ASFA requirements.
- On-site case review indicated that there is an accurate use of compelling reasons not to file TPR.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholder interviews indicated that while TPR filings appear to be occurring, case record review indicated that there are delays. Some stakeholders expressed concerns that social workers were reluctant to create legal orphans if adoptive homes were not already identified. There were also concerns that the lengthy appeals process could add years to the time a child remains in care before adoption is completed. It suggests a need to explore an expedited appeals process.
- Review team members suggested a need to improve case documentation, particularly for compelling reason, for TPR cases.

Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement



## Basis:

### State Assessment

According to information provided by Arizona's FCRB, increasing caregiver participation in court and FCRB hearings have been a priority since the passage of the ASFA. Some courts have worked with case managers from DES to ensure proper notice is given to parties, and other courts have ensured that their clerk's officers notified these caregivers through minute entries that announce the date of the next hearing.

If the caregivers cannot attend, the case manager encourages them to provide information by phone at the time of the review, by letter or memo, or through a telephonic statement before or after the review. To ensure caregivers are notified, the FCRB mails invitations two weeks before the review, notifies the next review date on the current meeting's minutes, and supplies a monthly FCRB case review schedule to all CPS case management units. In addition, the FCRB established a goal for staff to call each foster parent and/or child over 12 years of age to invite them to the review, or at the very least, participate in an alternative manner. According to the FCRB, this effort has dramatically increased participation for these target groups and the FCRB is working to institutionalize this practice. Comments of foster parents in the Statewide Assessment focus groups clearly show that the efforts have been successful. Respondents overwhelmingly reported their input is solicited and valued.

In relation to court hearings, the data indicate that while caregivers are invited to court hearings, their input is not consistently requested and often, they perceive, not valued. The Statewide Assessment indicated that the foster parents provided many reasonable suggestions for improving this situation, which warrant consideration.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- The case record review indicated that there is notification of foster and adoptive parents inviting their participation in court and FCRB hearings. The tribes are also receiving proper notification.
- The stakeholder interviews shared that the FCRB hearings are open and foster parents are encouraged to participate in the review hearing process.
- Stakeholder interviews and on-site case review indicated tribes (particularly the Navajo Nation) receive timely notice of ICWA children in care.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Foster parent stakeholder interviews indicated that the opportunity to be heard and participate in a court hearing is inconsistent, and the court may rely on CASA or GAL to speak for the foster parents.

### III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4

This systematic factor is rated "2" and is not in substantial conformity.

The State needs to continue the implementation of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system Statewide.

Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

#### State Assessment

The standards set by DES policy and procedure are applied and met. Individual cases are monitored through internal and external review processes such as the Hotline quality assurance review of all calls to the Hotline, Protective Services Review Teams, removal review team reviews, case plan staffings, court hearings, FCRB Hearings, Utilization Case Reviews, District 1 Quality Assurance Team, worker and client specific CHILDS data reports, and supervisory case review checklists conducted at the time of case closure or transfer and quarterly for ongoing case management cases.

The State's comprehensive policy manual also demonstrates that Arizona has set standards for investigative and ongoing case management activities and for many of the activities performed within systems that support work with children and families. These standards are based on safety, permanency, and well-being Outcomes set out in the State's Strategic Plan. DES has met the requirement to implement these standards through various internal and external oversight activities.

## On-site

### Strengths:

- Stakeholder interviews verified that the standards for casework are set forth in the policy and procedures manual. The policy manual is automated for easy access.
- There are various processes in place to review quality of case work along the continuum of care, from investigation to discharge from foster care, based on the information provided by stakeholders and case record review.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- There is no single Statewide quality assurance system currently in place.. Stakeholder interviews and case record reviews indicated a need to improve oversight of foster homes to improve and ensure quality of care.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

### State Assessment

DES has an effective system for gathering aggregate and external information with which to evaluate the adequacy and quality of its services and systems and to plan program improvements. The information is used to evaluate progress in relation to the outcome-based performance measures included in the State's Strategic Plan. Arizona's State Strategic Plan was consolidated with the Federal Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), which include outcome-based performance measures set by ASFA and others developed with the input of DES staff and community stakeholders.

Many of the review procedures described in item 30 above also produce aggregate data that are analyzed to provide a comprehensive view of the outcomes and effectiveness of services provided and reviewed for compliance with policy, reasonable efforts, and barriers to permanency, and training needs.

A feedback loop is created through reporting of outcome data to interested stakeholders via reports such as: Key Performance Results (KPRs), Statewide Strategic Plan, Governor's Annual Report, annual Arizona Statewide Scorecard, Arizona Drug and Gang Prevention Resource Center (ADGPRC) annual data, master list of State Government Programs and the Child Welfare Reporting Requirements semi-annual report. These reports provide an opportunity for external stakeholders to track progress in areas of importance to them and provide feedback to DES.

For the Statewide Assessment, DES mailed surveys to stakeholders across the State asking them to describe the opportunities they have to provide to DES their input, insights, and evaluations of services, policies and practices. They were further asked how effectively DES incorporates input from stakeholders into its planning, policies and practices, and how DES could improve its use of stakeholder input. The survey results indicated these opportunities do exist, and that many stakeholders who participated in these opportunities perceive their input as valued and used.

However, the low number of survey respondents and the number of respondents who chose not to respond to the questions related to provision of input and feedback to DES suggest that many stakeholders are not aware of existing opportunities to provide feedback or choose not to participate. DES feels that further evaluation is needed to determine if those providing feedback are representative of the community or if increased outreach efforts are needed to obtain stakeholder input from a broader array of individuals.

Some respondents reported feeling their input is not valued or effectively used. Arizona has recognized the need for a more formalized process designed to routinely receive stakeholder input and evaluate progress related to specific DES goals. As a result, DES has started a planning and implementation process to improve its continuous quality improvement (CQI) system.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- Stakeholder interviews noted that oversight and numerous quality assurance systems are utilized to monitor case work and service outcomes. Systems include the Hotline quality assurance review of all calls to the Hotline; Protective Services Review Team; removal review team reviews; case plan staffing; court hearings; FCRB Hearings; Utilization Case Review; District 1 Quality Assurance Team; worker and client specific CHILDS data reports; and supervisory case review checklists conducted at the time of case closure or transfer and quarterly for ongoing case management cases.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- As there is no single Statewide quality assurance system, the State needs to continue to take steps to implement the new CQI system. This will formalize the quality assurance system Statewide.

## IV. TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4

This systematic factor is rated "2" and is not in substantial conformity.

In order for workers to be adequately trained and prepared, they must complete core training prior to assuming a full caseload. And DES needs to develop and implement a process to monitor the consistency and quality of training for foster parents.

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under Titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

The State provides initial and ongoing training for staff through a variety of methods and opportunities, such as the core training for case managers, supervisors, parent aide, specialized workshops and conferences, out-of service, tuition reimbursement and policy training.

Focus group results indicated the timeliness of initial training for case managers is problematic in that staff routinely absorb full caseloads prior to completing training. However, it was noted in Arizona's Statewide Assessment that the Training Network, planned for implementation in January 2002, will enable staff to complete initial training prior to assuming a full caseload. The timeliness of Supervisor Core training will also be improved.

The stipend program developed in partnership with the Arizona State University, School of Social Work, has been successful. It was noted that nearly all staff hired out of the program within the past five years remain employed with Child Protective Services.

Availability of initial CHILDS automation training to new staff, ongoing staff training through refresher courses or specialized trainings and in office support are viewed by Arizona as a strength in the DES training program.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- Stakeholder interviews report that the workers are well trained, and the core training address the workers' basic needs to fulfill responsibilities.
- Courts and community providers (Maricopa County) view case managers as knowledgeable and effective.
- Stakeholder interviews indicated that the recently adopted new worker training (Training Institute – Pre-core training) would assist workers in achieving satisfactory outcomes for children and families.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholder interviews indicated that workers are not able to complete core training prior to assuming a caseload due to vacancy rates. Therefore, workers are not adequately trained and prepared prior to assuming a full caseload.
- It was also noted in the stakeholder interviews that the training should provide more practical information and skills to enable workers to do the job. The practice/procedures training should match the court procedures Statewide.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

### State Assessment

DES views the array of opportunities for ongoing training provided to staff through specialized workshops or conferences, out-of-service training, and tuition reimbursement as strengths. Field staff identified these many and varied opportunities as beneficial in enhancing the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their work.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- Stakeholder interviews report that there are opportunities for on-going and advance training. Advanced and specialized training are viewed as high quality.
- Higher education is encouraged and financially supported by the agency for caseworkers. The BSW/MSW stipend program is a partnership between the agency and Arizona State University using funding from Title IV-E.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholder interviews identified a need to develop a more formal and structured training in areas of specialties.
- Geographic access to training needs improvement. Training is usually held in Phoenix, which makes it difficult for workers to attend due to travel distance from rural areas.

- Stakeholder interviews indicated that the supervisors are not kept abreast of what workers are learning; therefore, they are not supportive of new techniques and approaches workers learn in training.
- Stakeholder interviews suggested more cross training with the FCRB, attorneys, providers, CASA and tribes on the scope of agency's mission to serve children and families.

Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under Title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

#### State Assessment

Training requirements for foster parents and group care provider staff are well-defined in Arizona regulations. Training requirements for adoptive parents are limited to an orientation, although it is noted that most children are adopted by relatives or licensed foster parents.

DES indicated that the basic training currently provided is meeting the need for the skills and knowledge required to perform caregiver duties based on the survey feedback and focus group input from foster and foster-adoptive parents. It was also suggested in the focus group feedback, providing experienced foster parents, as mentors would be helpful for new foster parents. There are indicators that foster caregivers would like to have more opportunities for advanced or specialized training in a variety of topics. Also, making child care available and videotaping trainings would improve the accessibility of training. With the current initiative in Arizona to enhance training through the development of the Training Network, the opportunity exists to consider these recommendations.

#### On-site

Strengths:

- Stakeholder interviews indicated that many contractors combine foster and adoptive training, which facilitates adoption.
- Contractors for foster parent training permit training to be individualized and tailored to the community.
- Foster parents have access to a variety of in-service training and frequently complete more than the minimum of 6 hours per year.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholder interviews also indicated a need to develop and implement a process to monitor the consistency and quality of training for foster parents.
- Stakeholder interviews indicated a need to develop more advanced and specialized training for foster parents, especially in the area of caring for older children and children with emotional and/or behavioral issues.

## V. SERVICE ARRAY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	<b>3</b>	4

This systematic factor is rated "3" and is in substantial conformity.

Maintaining the continuity of care when a child moves from one community to another was noted in the stakeholder interviews and case record reviews as needing improvement. The continuity of services and case management is not always maintained when a child is transferred or moves to a different location in the State.

Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

A wide array of services are available and provided within the agency and through contracts with outside agencies, organizations and providers to support safe and appropriate reunification in Arizona. The State also utilizes a variety of community services and resources such as Boys and Girls clubs, churches, food banks, school lunch programs, Head Start programs, Parents Anonymous, service clubs, and others to ensure that the needs of the family are met. Services such as the Substance Abuse Treatment Program, Family Group Decision Making and Promoting Safe and Stable Families Initiative are services that have been expanded due to the evidence of the successfulness of the services.

Focus group and survey responses indicate the collaboration with other agencies to expand substance abuse treatment for parents and guardians as strength for Arizona. This was identified by numerous stakeholders as a Statewide service need. The need for improved mental health services for parents and children was another area that the focus group participants, interviewees and survey respondents emphasized is a tremendous need.

Parents surveyed identified that in-home services and monitoring are alternatives that could be effective to prevent removal of the children from



homes. Stakeholders, who have experience with families where removal was prevented, reported effectiveness in services such as family preservation, housing assistance, Healthy Families, Family Builders and in-home services.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- A comprehensive array of services to address safety, permanency and well-being are available across the State, especially in urban areas (e.g., Family Builders, Family Preservation, Families First).
- The State Agency is piloting new projects, like 300 Kids Project, to coordinate services and individualize approaches to achieve permanency for hard-to-place children.
- Stakeholders identified Family Group Decision Making as effective in maintaining children at home or for placement with relatives.
- Stakeholders view community multi-disciplinary teams as effective in assessing needs and planning treatment.
- Cochise County is effectively utilizing placement liaisons to monitor residential placements.
- Programs such as Family Builders have assisted families to reduce risk factors and assisted the State in providing a 100% response rate to reports of child abuse and neglect.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholders universally identified mental health services as a major challenge (getting therapy, availability of specialized services, frequent turnover in counselors, few services for non-English speaking clients).
- Residential drug and alcohol treatment facilities in the State were identified as needs.
- Post-finalization of adoption services is very limited if available in the State.
- Transportation to and availability of services in rural areas is a challenge.
- Stakeholders identified the need for more services and family foster homes for youth and specialized homes for children with emotional needs.
- DES and Family Builders need to explore more effective strategies to engage a greater number of families in services.

Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP.

\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

#### State Assessment

With the exception of certain programs that are in pilot project status, services identified in item 35 are generally available in all districts throughout the State. There are differences between districts regarding which services are provided through contracts, and differences in contracted providers. Since some rural districts encompass several counties, there are instances where certain services are available within the district, yet not available in

each county. Due to the vast amount of rural land in Arizona, accessibility from a purely logistical (travel and transportation) standpoint is varied. Therefore, more rural communities continue to need more immediate accessible services and/or more transportation resources. See chart on page 47 of Arizona's Statewide Assessment for specific information regarding service availability in each of the districts.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- The degree of service availability varies in the rural areas, but the State is to be given credit for attempting to coordinate a variety of community services in local areas.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Transferring services and maintaining the continuity of care when a child moves from one community to another was noted in the stakeholder interviews and case record reviews as needing improvement. The continuity of services and case management are not always maintained when a child is transferred or moves to a different location in the State.
- Availability of services in rural areas and the travel distance are on-going challenges in the State. Title XIX mental health services, adequate placement resources, residential treatment programs and crisis shelters were noted by case managers, therapists and stakeholders as a need, particularly in rural areas.

Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

### State Assessment

An individualized case plan is required for every child in out-of-home care. Services may be provided either by the case manager, other DES staff, contract providers, community resources, and/or volunteers depending on the needs of the child and family. All services and activities specified in the case plan are to be time-limited. Progress is monitored and evaluated by the case manager.

Case management services, parent aide, parent skills training/classes/mental health programs, housing assistance program, intensive in-home services, substance abuse treatment program, family group decision making program, promoting safe and stable families, community-based family-centered services, community resources (support and emergency assistance and the 300 Kids Project) are some of the services that are provided to children and families and individualized to meet their unique needs.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- Individualizing services to meet the needs of children and families is possible in the State given the array of services available.
- MDT has been successfully utilized in assessment and case planning.
- Family Builders, Family Preservation Project Thrive and Family Reunification programs offer more flexibility and are able to tailor services to meet child and family specific needs.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholders noted that except for the 300 Kids Project, flexible funds and services that are outside the scope of the program contract are not available to meet the extraordinary and unique needs of children and families.
- The tremendous need for specialized mental health services, especially for children with severe emotional disturbances and victims of sexual abuse, was cited by stakeholders numerous times and noted in the case record reviews.
- Stakeholders also noted a growing need for specialized services to address the unique behavioral and therapeutic needs of the dually adjudicated youth population.

## VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4

This systematic factor is rated "4" and is in substantial conformity.

Stakeholders indicated DES is responsive, and there is a broad and inclusive process to seek input and share information with community partners.

Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

The broad range of stakeholder involvement and the opportunities for consultation through 138 Statewide and local groups discussed in Arizona's Statewide Assessment is impressive. In addition to receiving input from stakeholders through formal and ad hoc meetings sponsored by either DES-DCYF or the legislature, DES DCYF also receives and reviews reports and recommendations developed by stakeholder groups. These external reports include those prepared by the FCRB and the Advisory Committee on Multi-Ethnic Representation.

The DCYF Advisory Council, DES Community Advisory Committee(s) in each District, Youth Advisory Board and tribal representatives are consulted and provide input in DES's State Strategic Plan/CFSP. Feedback from members of the DCYF Statewide Advisory Council provides most direct input into the development of the Title IV-B plan. They are generally more satisfied with the value of their input and the outcomes of their recommendations. The same is true of the Multi-Ethnic Representation Committee, which is also primarily a central office function. Stakeholders in smaller and more rural districts also appeared to be satisfied with the level, frequency and outcomes of their consultation with the Division. The State feels that this may be a reflection of the more personal nature of much of the work and working relationships in these districts. People generally stay in positions longer and develop more personal working relationships with stakeholders in their local communities.

It appears from the input received from the district and community advisory boards that the implementation of stakeholder communication is inconsistent in local areas and perhaps even among communities within local areas. The ability to be consistent in communication may be due to workload and the significance given to the process for consultation. And local board members may have less knowledge about what happens to their recommendations once they reach the State central office level.

On-site:

### Strengths

- Stakeholders indicated a broad and inclusive process for input from external stakeholders in the development and implementation of the DES's State Strategic Plan/CFSP. Arizona has in place a Statewide Advisory Council and DES Community Advisory Committee(s) in each District. The Youth Advisory Board and tribal representatives are consulted and provide input in DES's State Strategic Plan/CFSP. Arizona should be commended for their efforts reaching out and partnering with external stakeholders.
- State staff are made aware of initiatives and collaboration efforts.
- DES is viewed as a "glass house" open to all.
- There are excellent collaborative relationships with tribes, particularly the Navajo Nation. The Indian Child Welfare Unit has improved coordination and expedited permanency in cases where tribal membership has been verified.

### Area Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholders expressed some concerns about Family Builders' ability to protect children from abuse and/or neglect. This may be due to the lack of understanding on the part of stakeholders of the Family Builders' criteria for referral, threshold for removal, and the fact that cases that never would have been investigated are responded to and receive services.

Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

DES DCYF consults and obtains input in the development of the Title IV-B CFS Plan and receives and reviews reports and recommendations developed by stakeholder groups. They are also involved in a great number of collaboration activities and initiatives that allow for consultation and collaboration as indicated in item number 38 above.

For more information and details on these collaboration and coordination efforts, see pages 52-54 of Arizona's Statewide Assessment.

### On-site

#### Strength:

- Arizona has broad input from external stakeholders in development and implementation of the DES's State Strategic Plan/CFSP and their annual progress and services reports through their Statewide Advisory Council, DES Community Advisory Committee(s) in each District, Youth Advisory Board and tribal representatives.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

None identified.

Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

#### Basis:

#### State Assessment

The State of Arizona supports and sponsors collaborative efforts among human service agencies at the executive branch level. In addition, DES supports collaborations with other human service public and private agencies at both the central office and district levels. Although collaborations have been in process for years, more recent efforts have been aided by the Joint Visioning Agreement that was signed in 1999 by the Arizona Department of Economic Security on behalf of the Division; the Arizona Department of Health Services on behalf of the Division of Behavioral Health Services; the Arizona Department of Education; the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System; the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections; and the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts. This agreement sets the stage for a "through the eyes of the child" approach and models the expectation that at every level of the system, public entities will collaborate to improve services, fill gaps and reduce duplication.

For the purposes of this Statewide Assessment, DES DCYF completed a survey of key stakeholders including judges, attorneys and guardians ad litem, CASAs, lawyers in the Office of the Attorney General (which serves as the attorney for the DCYF), District and Community Advisory Board members, field staff and the DCYF Statewide Advisory Council. The responses from the external stakeholders expressed more concerns about the level and type of collaboration with the Behavioral Health System, juvenile court/probation systems and relations with the trial authorities.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- Stakeholders cited numerous examples of positive ongoing collaboration and coordination efforts both at the systems and the case level. The on-site case records provided evidence of strong collaboration between the agency and schools in order to creatively address the educational needs of

children especially in rural areas.

- The Court system has integrated the “through the eyes of a child” approach in its philosophy regarding permanency.
- Case records demonstrated worker efforts to help families’ access other services (such as public assistance, Medicaid and Food Stamps) to meet their needs.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholder interviews indicated that disagreements regarding the service provision with Behavioral Health Title XIX providers result in delays in services needed.
- The need to improve collaboration with the educational systems and probation in some areas of the State was indicated in the stakeholder interviews and case records.

## VII. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4

This systematic factor is rated "3" and is in substantial conformity.

The State needs to improve recruitment efforts for foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial profile of children needing homes.

Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

Arizona has appropriate standards for foster family homes, court-approved kinship homes, adoptive homes and child care institutions, and the State feels that they are effectively established, maintained, and enforced. The policies are clear and mechanisms are in place to enforce and monitor compliance through licensing authorities, court review, and approval processes.

### On-site

Strengths:

- The State has implemented comprehensive licensing standards for foster and adoptive homes and child care institutions that reflect national standards.
- Court approved kinship foster homes and certified adoptive homes facilitate relative placements.
- Case record reviews confirmed low maltreatment in care, which suggests the State has quality foster care providers.
- Stakeholders indicated that there are mechanisms in place to monitor compliance of foster homes.



### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Reports of abuse and/or neglect for children in child care institutions are not filed in the foster care case files, possibly because the reports are not made to the Hotline.

Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving Title IV-E or IV-B funds.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

### State Assessment

- There is consistency of applying established standards for all of the following placement types:
  - Licensed family foster homes (relative or non-relative),
  - Court-approved kinship homes,
  - Certified adoptive homes (non-relative),
  - Court-approved relative adoptive homes, and
  - Licensed child care institutions (group homes, shelters).
- By allowing relatives to either pursue licensure and receive a foster care maintenance payment or be approved as an unpaid court approved kinship placement, DES is able to maximize kinship resources while maintaining standards for all placement types. The option given to relatives to pursue either licensure or court approval is believed to enable more children to be placed with relatives. Relatives who do not wish to pursue licensure can still provide a home to related foster children, without compromising the children's health or safety, by meeting established standards for court approval.
- The court approval process for relative adoptive placements is also helpful in ensuring established standards to ensure children's safety and well-being are applied equally to all relatives applying to adopt.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- Arizona has a single set of licensing standards that appear to be consistently applied to all homes.
- Licensing workers have regular contact with homes to provide on-going support to foster parents.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

None identified.

Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

#### State Assessment

Arizona statute and Licensing Rules require fingerprinting for a State and national criminal background check for all foster and adoptive homes, court approved kinship homes and all staff of child care institutions. A criminal history self-disclosure affidavit is also required of all applicants, adult household members and childcare institution staff.

Fingerprinting of kinship care providers is required prior to the placement of a child in the home unless the child has been placed in the home prior to filing of a dependency petition. If so, an emergency history check by the Arizona Department of Public Safety based upon identifying information must be completed. The kinship providers must then be fingerprinted prior to the court's approval of the placement.

Child care institutions are required to have staff complete fingerprinting prior to providing direct supervision to children in care. Group home and shelter staff typically are fingerprinted through the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety, Fingerprinting Division applies standards established in State statute to determine whether to issue a fingerprint clearance card or deny clearance and to determine the clearance level of an issued card

The Federal Regional Office conducted a Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review in August 2000. It was verified that all the criminal background and safety checks were met according to the ASFA requirements.

#### On-site

##### Strengths:

- The State is complying with criminal background checks.

##### Areas Needing Improvement:

- The time frame required for FBI clearance needs to be streamlined.

Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Basis:

#### State Assessment

Arizona has three levels of recruitment: general, targeted and child specific for the diligent recruitment of ethnic and racially diverse foster and adoptive parents. Recruitment and retention activities are primarily district based, although a listing of legally free children without an identified adoptive placement is compiled quarterly by each district and submitted to the DES's central office recruitment coordinator for child specific recruitment.

Data indicate DES's strategies to recruit ethnically and racially diverse homes have resulted in a 15% increase in newly certified ethnic and racially diverse adoptive homes from SFY 1999 to SFY 2000. Furthermore, between the end of FFY 1999 and FFY 2000, there has been a net 4.6% increase in the combined percentage of existing foster and adoptive homes that have at least one parent who is African American, American Indian, Asian or Hispanic. Within this same time frame, the total number of foster or adoptive homes within every one of these racial or ethnic groups increased.

Although DES has set goals to increase the number of newly licensed diverse foster homes during this same time period, the number only slightly increased. The number of ethnically and racially diverse children who have exited foster care to finalized adoptions has increased, suggesting that the desired outcome of moving children of all ethnic and racial backgrounds to permanency is being accomplished.

Despite the improvements, the ethnic and racial diversity of available foster and adoptive homes is not equivalent to the diversity of children in out-of-home care. The State's Strategic Plan/CFSP continues to contain goals for increasing recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial profile of children needing homes.

#### On-site

Strengths:

- The State's new performance-based contracts for recruiting foster and adoptive homes will assist in moving children to permanency. The new contracts are designed to not only recruit homes, but also provide incentives for recruiting specialized care, ethnic minority homes and moving children to permanency.

### Areas Needing Improvement:

- The State needs to improve recruitment efforts for foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial profile of children needing homes. The State Assessment noted an over representation of children from the African American, Hispanic and Native American ethnic backgrounds.
- The State needs to improve recruitment of specialized therapeutic homes for challenging children. The lack of available residential treatment and crisis shelters results in placements outside the community (particularly true in rural areas) or the State.
- The State needs to improve recruitment of foster homes for youth to reduce placements in group home.
- The State needs to improve collaboration with tribes in efforts to recruit foster/adoptive homes. The limited number of Native American foster homes has resulted in siblings being placed separately, and placement decisions based only on availability.

Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

### Basis:

#### State Assessment

Arizona has successfully used a wide variety of special recruitment resources to place children in adoptive homes. At least 34 children have been placed outside Arizona as a direct result of special recruitment efforts, including sibling groups and children with special needs. The State feels the data provided in their Statewide Assessment might be underestimated since the information from the field to the State's Central Office foster care/adoption recruitment staff is not required when individuals attempt to adopt a child via Internet resources or when a finalized adoption has occurred involving special recruitment efforts.

The Arizona Adoption Exchange Book (AAEB) is a photo listing of children who are legally free for adoption with 63 active children listed as of May 2001. The AAEB is distributed to adoption agencies, libraries and individuals nationally and Statewide. Between July 1, 2000 and March 1, 2001, 34 children were added to the listing and 33 were removed as a result of being placed in an adoptive home. Reporting information indicates that six of the homes were located as a result of the AAEB.

In State Fiscal Year 2000, 39 children were referred for special recruitment efforts including registration with FACES of Adoption and other cross-jurisdictional placement resources. In SFY 2000, 13 of the children were placed as a result of the Internet service FACES of Adoption. From July 1, 2000 to April 30, 2001, 33 additional children were referred for special recruitment and were registered with FACES of Adoption and other cross-jurisdictional resources placement. Another 21 children were placed through the FACES of Adoption Internet service in SFY 2001. An additional 14 children have had interstate and intrastate homes identified and are currently involved in the placement transition process. 4 of these 14 children are members of a sibling group, and 2 of them are severely medically compromised.

In July 2000, two African American siblings were placed with an adoptive family in New Jersey through "Downey Side."

The State Strategic Plan/CFSP includes objectives to increase the percentage of children achieving permanency and to decrease the percentage of

children in out-of-home care for more than 24 consecutive months. To achieve these objectives, DES continues to identify and address barriers to cross-jurisdictional adoption.

### On-site

#### Strengths:

- The State utilizes the Internet FACES of Adoption, AAEB and adoption registry to maximize access to cross-jurisdictional resources to identify out-of-state placements for children.
- The specialized adoption unit does intensive recruitment for legally free children with no placement identified.

#### Areas Needing Improvement:

- Stakeholders noted delays in processing ICPC cases.

## APPENDIX A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS CHART

“**Y**” – State is determined to be in substantial conformity and “**N**” - State is determined not to be in substantial conformity.  
A check mark beside the performance indicator, listed by item number indicates area needing improvement.

Safety	Child and Family Well-Being	<u>N</u> Quality Assurance System
<u>Y</u> Outcome S1	<u>N</u> Outcome WB1	<u>0</u> Item 30
<u>    </u> Item 1	<u>0</u> Item 17	<u>0</u> Item 31
<u>    </u> Item 2	<u>0</u> Item 18	<u>N</u> Training
	<u>    </u> Item 19	
<u>Y</u> Outcome S2	<u>0</u> Item 20	<u>0</u> Item 32
<u>    </u> Item 3	<u>N</u> Outcome WB2	<u>    </u> Item 33
<u>    </u> Item 4		<u>0</u> Item 34
	<u>√</u> Item 21	<u>Y</u> Service Array
Permanency	<u>N</u> Outcome WB3	<u>    </u> Item 35
<u>N</u> Outcome P1	<u>0</u> Item 22	<u>0</u> Item 36
<u>0</u> Item 5	<u>0</u> Item 23	<u>    </u> Item 37
<u>√</u> Item 6		
<u>0</u> Item 7	Systemic Factors	<u>Y</u> Agency Responsiveness to the Community
<u>    </u> Item 8		
<u>0</u> Item 9	<u>Y</u> Statewide Information System	<u>    </u> Item 38
<u>    </u> Item 10	<u>    </u> Item 24	<u>    </u> Item 39
<u>N</u> Outcome P2	<u>Y</u> Case Review System	<u>    </u> Item 40
<u>    </u> Item 11		<u>Y</u> Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention
<u>    </u> Item 12	<u>0</u> Item 25	
<u>0</u> Item 13	<u>    </u> Item 26	<u>    </u> Item 41
<u>    </u> Item 14	<u>    </u> Item 27	<u>    </u> Item 42
<u>    </u> Item 15	<u>    </u> Item 28	<u>    </u> Item 43
<u>    </u> Item 16	<u>    </u> Item 29	<u>0</u> Item 44
		<u>    </u> Item 45

## APPENDIX B

### ARIZONA REVIEW – PENALTY CALCULATION ESTIMATE

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Pool of Funds*	
Title IV-E Foster Care Administrative Costs	\$25,531,954 ** <u>10.00%</u>
	2,553,195
Title IV-B Subpart 1	5,214,250
Title IV-B Subpart 2	<u>4,879,258</u>
Total Pool	\$12,646,703

**\*Based on:**

**Title IV-E FY 2001, 3 quarters actual and 1 quarter estimated**

Title IV-B FY 2001 allocation (excludes ITO's)

**\*\* Excludes SAWIS operational costs**

Final calculation will include Foster Care Administrative costs prior quarter adjustments related to the penalty year.

**Estimated penalty per area of non-conformity: \$126,467**

**Total estimated Arizona penalty for 7 areas of non-conformity: \$885,269.**

The administration for Children and Families (ACF) is suspending the withholding of funds associated with this penalty during the period of the approved PIP. If ACF determines that the State is successful in rectifying any of the areas that are in non-conformity through successful completion of the PIP, we will rescind the withholding of Federal funds associated with those areas at that time.

## **ACRONYMS/GLOSSARY**

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AAEB – Arizona Adoption Exchange Book

AASK – Aid to Adoption of Special Kids

AHCCCS – Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

ALJ – Administrative Law Judge

ALTCS – Arizona Long Term Care System

AZ DES – Arizona Department of Economic Security

CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates

CHILDS – Children’s Information Library and Data Sources

CMDP – Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program

DES DCYF – Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families

EPST – Early Periodic Diagnostic and Screening Test

Family Builders – Intervention, less intrusive services for low risk families

FCRB – Foster Care Review Board

FGDMP – Family Group Decision Making Program

FIRST – Families in Recovery Succeeding Together

Guardianship Subsidy Program – Subsidy program funded by State funds to provide assistance to eligible dependent children and permanent guardians.

HYIP – Homeless Youth Intervention Program

MDTs – Multidisciplinary Teams

New Responses – intensive six months in-home behavior management and counseling program

Project Thrive – Early intervention family support program for parents and infants

PRST – Protective Services Review Team

RBHA – Regional Behavioral Health Authority

YATI – Young Adult Transitional Insurance (Medicaid program)

300 Kids Project – agreement between 5 State agencies to provide family centered, wrap around services to 300 kids (District I – 200 kids, District III – 100 kids)



**ARIZONA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW TEAM**

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Mary Scott, CPS Supervisor  
Mark Seeger, CPS Supervisor  
Kay Stevenson, Executive Staff Assistant  
Cliff Singer, District Automation Liaison  
Kimberly Starks, CPS Adoptions Supervisor  
Belva Stites, Foster Care Policy and Program Specialist  
Norma Garcia-Torres, Behavioral Health Specialist  
Cheryl Twiggs, Quality Assurance Specialist  
Alicia Wasklewicz, Program Specialist  
Susan Weil, Protective Services Review Team Specialist  
Jack Yardley, Prevention Supervisor, Home Court Advantage, Casey Family Program  
Mindy Duncan-Zipprich, CPS Program Specialist